

entering the locked digital content into a playing device that reads the key code and determines whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of acquiring the physical electronic key includes providing the key provider with user identification information for use by the key provider in establishing a user account, the user account including the user identification information and the key code.

28. The method of claim 26, further including providing the content provider with the key code for use by the content provider in validating the key code prior to providing the locked digital content.

29. The method of claim 26, wherein the locked digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption.

30. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of acquiring the physical electronic key includes accessing a first web site of the key provider and requesting the physical electronic key via the first web site, and wherein the step of requesting the digital content includes accessing a second web site of the content provider and requesting the digital content via the second web site.

31. The method of claim 26, wherein the physical electronic key is acquired at no charge, and wherein the digital content is purchased.

32. A method of managing digital rights comprising:
providing a physical electronic key containing a key code to a requesting user;
locking digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical electronic key;

after locking the digital content, providing the locked digital content to the requesting user;
receiving the locked digital content in a playing device that reads the key code and determines whether the key code is associated with the unlock code; and enabling the playing device to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code.

33. The method of claim 32, further including establishing a user account including user identification information and the key code for the requesting user prior to the step of providing the physical electronic key.

34. The method of claim 32, further including obtaining and validating the key code for the requesting user prior to the step of providing the locked digital content.

35. The method of claim 32, further including administering a first web site for receiving a request for the physical electronic key from the requesting user, and administering a second web site for receiving a request for the digital content from the requesting user.

36. The method of claim 32, wherein the locked digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption.

37. The method of claim 32, wherein the physical electronic key and the playing device include respective wireless transceivers for communicating the key code from the key to the playing device.

38. A digital rights management system, comprising:
a physical electronic key containing a key code and provided to a requesting user;
means for locking digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical electronic key;
means for providing the locked digital content to the requesting user; and

a playing device for receiving the locked digital content, receiving the key code, and determining whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein the physical electronic key and the playing device include means for communicating the key code to the playing device.

40. The system of claim 38, wherein the means for providing the locked digital content to the requesting user includes a web site on the Internet.

41. The system of claim 40, wherein the means for providing the locked digital content secures validation of the key code prior to providing the locked digital content.

42. The system of claim 38, further including means for providing the physical electronic key, and establishing a user account including user identification information and the key code for the requesting user prior to providing the key.

43. The system of claim 42, wherein the means for providing the physical electronic key includes a web site on the Internet.

44. A digital rights management system, comprising:
a physical electronic key containing a key code;
digital content locked, at a time of acquisition of the digital content by a requesting user,
with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical electronic key; and
a playing device for receiving the locked digital content, receiving the key code, and determining whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code.